

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 USPS-01 CCO-00 CIAE-00
OTPE-00 FCC-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 OC-06 USIA-15
COME-00 BIB-01 IO-14 DODE-00 DOTE-00 CG-00 SIL-01
LAB-04 L-03 /080 W

-----065277 281957Z /47

R 281528Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1367

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 CARACAS 1937

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, PGOV, VE

SUBJ: POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH INSTITUTE ESTABLISHED.

1. SUMMARY: THE GOV HAS CREATED A NEW AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTE TO HANDLE POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH SERVICES. THE PRESENTLY POOR QUALITY OF THESE SERVICES SHOULD IMPROVE AS A RESULT OF THE INSTITUTE'S GREATER MANAGEMENT AUTONOMY. THE INSTITUTE REPORTEDLY WILL ATTEMPT TO FURTHER MECHANIZE POSTAL SERVICE OPERATIONS, WHICH COULD CREATE EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. MANUFACTURERS OF DOCUMENT-HANDLING EQUIPMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JANUARY 27,1978 VENEZUELA'S PRESIDENT SIGNED THE LAW WHICH CREATES THE VENEZUELAN POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH INSTITUTE (INSTITUTO VENEZOLANO DE CORREOS Y TELEGRAFOS). A COMMITMENT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION WAS CONTAINED IN THE 1976 FIFTH PLAN OF THE NATION. IT HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED THAT PART OF THE CAUSE FOR THE UNRELIABILITY OF VENEZUELA'S MAILS AND TELEGRAPH SERVICES LIES IN THE LIMITED ADMINISTRATIVE FREEDOM OF A MINISTRY, AND IT IS HOPED THAT AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY WILL HAVE SUFFICIENT ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL, PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT FREEDOM TO BETTER CARRY OUT ITS REPOSIBILITIES.

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3. THE NEW ORGANIZATION WILL HAVE THE LEGAL STATUS OF AN "AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTE" WITH ITS OWN RESOURCES APART FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FINANCES, AND THEREFORE NOT SUBJECT TO THE BUDGET OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, NOR TO THE SALARY LIMITATIONS UNDER THE CIVIL SERVICE. IT WILL BE UNDER THE LEGAL JURISDICTION OF THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS AND WILL BE HEADED BY A

PRESIDENT, A VICE PRESIDENT AND THREE DIRECTORS, ALL OF WHOM ARE TO BE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES. THE INSTITUTE WILL REQUIRE AUTHORIZATION BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE PRIOR TO SIGNING CONTRACTS WITH A VALUE IN EXCESS OF BS.5MILLION, PRIOR TO EFFECTING SALES OF INSTITUTE PROPERTY VALUED OVER BS1MILLION AND PRIOR TO SOLICITING FOREIGN LOANS OR CREDITS.

4. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INSTITUTE APPEAR TO BE BROADER THAN ORIGINALLY ENVISIONED. THEY ARE TO BE AS FOLLOWS:

MAIL SERVICE

POSTAL FINANCE SERVICES (MONEY ORDERS)

EMISSION, DISTRIBUTION AND SALE OF POSTAGE STAMPS.

PHILATELIC MATTERS

TELEGRAM SERVICE

FIXED AND MOBILE MARITIME GENERAL MESSAGE SERVICE.

FIXED AND MOBILE AERONAUTICAL MESSAGE SERVICES (CLASS B)

ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISES WITH ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INSTITUTE.

NOTE: THE INSTITUTE CAN PARTICIPATE IN SUCH VENTURES SUBJECT TO PRIOR AUTHORIZATION BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE.

5. THE INSTITUTE WILL ACT AS ADVISORY ARM TO THE GOVERNMENT IN QUESTIONS RELATED TO VENEZUELA'S RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS WITHIN THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION, THE POSTAL UNION OF THE AMERICAS AND SPAIN, THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION AND ANY OTHER
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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION RELATED TO POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC SERVICES

6. FURTHERMORE, THE LAW PROVIDES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC WORKERS SCHOOL. EMPLOYEE SELECTION WILL BE ENTIRELY IN THE HANDS OF THE INSTITUTE AND EMPLOYEES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED CIVIL SERVANTS BUT WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE VENEZUELAN LABOR LAW.

7. THE LAW WILL ENTER INTO FORCE 80 DAYS AFTER ITS PUBLICATION. PRESIDENT PEREZ HAS NOT YET NAMED THE INSTITUTE'S PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, NOR THE DIRECTORS, AND THE NEW INSTITUTE DOES NOT YET HAVE AN ADDRESS.

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8. EMBASSY COMMENTS: IT APPEARS TO BE GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT THE NEW ORGANIZATION WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FASTER AND MORE RELIABLE SERVICE THAN THE FORMER DIRECTORATE OF MAILS OF THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS. APART FROM FINANCIAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO BUDGET RESTRICTIONS, AND FROM MANAGEMENT RESTRICTIONS BASED ON GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS, ONE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS OF THE MAIL SYSTEM USED TO BE LABOR WHICH, BEING EMPLOYED BY THE PUBLIC SECTOR, WAS NOT SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AND DISMISSAL FOR CAUSE. ON THE OTHER HAND, POSTAL EMPLOYEES HAD TO WORK UNDER A LOWER WAGE SCALE WITH FEWER FRINGE BENEFITS THAN NORMAL IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THE TRAINING SCHOOL PROVIDED FOR BY THE LAW WILL GREATLY HELP IN UPGRADING EFFICIENCY AND HOPEFULLY WILL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS A GREATER SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AMONG POSTAL WORKERS.

9. IT IS NOT EXPECTED THAT THE NEW INSTITUTE WILL TAKE A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. POLICY WILL CONTINUE TO BE MADE AT THE MINISTRY LEVEL.

10. ONE OF THE GOALS OF THE NEW ORGANIZATION IS GREATER EFFICIENCY THROUGH MECHANIZATION. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE INSTITUTE WILL IMPLEMENT MECHANIZATION OF MAIL HANDLING IN STAGES, TIMED TO INTERNAL ORGANIZATION BUILD-UP AND WORKER TRAINING. MAIL HANDLING EQUIPMENT MIGHT, HOWEVER, BECOME AN INTERESTING PRODUCT ITEM FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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U.S. EXPORTERS, STARTING WITH CONVEYORS, SORTING EQUIPMENT, BAG HANDLING, WEIGHING AND POSTAGE METERING EQUIPMENT. IT IS NOT EXPECTED THAT SUCH SOPHISTICATED ITEMS AS OPTICAL CHARACTER READERS WILL BE OF INTEREST IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

11. THE TECHNICAL PLANT FOR TELEGRAPH SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED BY CANTV, THE NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY, AND ANY IMPROVEMENTS AND PURCHASES FOR THIS SYSTEM WILL BE EFFECTED BY THAT COMPANY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ITS DEVELOPMENT PLAN. THE NEW INSTITUTE

WILL PROVIDE RECEPTION AND DELIVERY SERVICES.

12. AS SOON AS THE IDENTITY OF THE MANAGERS AND THE ADDRESS OF THE
INSTITUTE ARE KNOWN THE EMBASSY WILL REPORT THEM.
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Message Attributes

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